Date notified: 16th February 1987

COUNTY: SUFFOLK SITE NAME: KENTWELL WOODS

DISTRICT: BABERGH

Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

Local Planning Authority: BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

National Grid Reference: TL 855495 Area: 79.03 (ha.) 195.28 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 155 1:10,000: TL 84 NW & E
TL 85 SE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1971 Date of Last Revision: –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1987 Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:
This site covers the southern part of the area formerly known as the Kentwell and Chadacre Woods SSSI. Within this area the boundary has been modified to exclude several areas of woodland that are not of SSSI standard.

Description and Reasons for Notification:
The Kentwell Woods SSSI consists of a group of fifteen woods, most of which were associated with the former Kentwell Estate. They contain a considerable range and variety of woodland types which reflects variations in soil type and management. The ground vegetation is typical of ancient woods, it contains several noteworthy species and shows some interesting distribution patterns.

The most widespread type of woodland is the wet Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*/Maple *Acer campestre* type, in which Hazel *Corylus avellana* is also abundant. In several woods, notably Calves, Court, Aveley and Alpheton woods an interesting variant of this type of woodland occurs in which Ash is very scarce, leaving the stand dominated by Hazel and Maple. Another variant is found more locally on some of the steeper slopes where the soil apparently becomes more acid and Maple is absent, leaving the stand dominated by Ash, Hazel and Pedunculate Oak *Quercus robur*.

Hornbeam *Carpinus betulus* occurs mainly in a restricted part of the site with stands in Herbage, Cold and Kiln Groves, though scattered individual stools are found in several other woods.

Suckering Invasive Elm *Ulmus spp.* is found in many of the woods and much of this has succumbed to Dutch Elm Disease. The Elm areas are undergoing rapid ecological change as a result and the direction and extent of this change is also influenced by management. A smaller number of woods, notably Aveley and Scotchford Woods and

Brakes Ley Grove contain stands of non-invasive, Wych Elm *Ulmus glabra*, though this also appears to be succumbing to Dutch Elm Disease.

In addition to these fairly widespread types of woodland there are a number of more restricted notable features. Aveley Wood shows an unusual transition from boulder clay woodland to fen carr, and there is a small area of Small-leaved Lime *Tilia cordata* on the boundary of Bar and Calves woods.

All the woods show evidence of having been worked as coppice-with-standards, though in most cases the coppice has been left uncut for many years. Standard trees, mainly Oak and Ash are rather sparse in some woods as a result of earlier fellings but Doghouse and Normans Grove have some well grown trees.

Several of these woods, have had sections clear-felled and replanted. In two cases the planted species were exotic conifers and these have not done sufficiently well to suppress the semi-natural woodland vegetation. In other cases the areas have been replanted with native hardwoods.

The ground vegetation of these woods is most frequently dominated by Dog's Mercury *Mercurialis perennis* or Brambles *Rubus spp.* Bluebells *Hyacinthoides non-scriptus* are abundant in several of the woods and small areas of Bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* occur on a steep slope in Calves Wood. Other species noted include Sanicle *Sanicula europaea*, Wood Avens *Geum urbanum*, Water Avens *Geum rivale*, Early Purple Orchid *Orchis mascula*, Ramsons *Allium ursinum*, Common Violet *Viola riviniana*, Pale Wood Violet *Viola reichenbachiana*, Wood Spurge *Euphorbia amygdaloides*, Moschatel Town Hall Clock *Adoxa moschatellina*, Wood Sorrel *Oxalis acetosella*, Spurge Laurel *Daphne laureola* and in one wood Bears Foot Stinking Hellebore *Helleborus foetidus*. The woods comprising this SSSI span the boundary of the area in which Oxlip *Primula elatior* replaces Primrose *Primula vulgaris* so that some woods contain Oxlip but no Primrose, others Primrose but no Oxlip whilst a few contain both species.

In areas where the Elm has died the ground vegetation has also been modified. Many of the woodland floor plants still persist but the vegetation tends to become dominated by plants of temporary woodland clearings such as Lesser Burdock *Arctium minus* and other tall, nutrient demanding species.

The history of this group of woods has been researched in some detail. There are documentary records for many of them and the majority also contain boundary ditch and bank systems that are characteristic of woods established in medieval times or earlier. Several woods possess old pollarded oaks on these boundary banks and some are of great size.